



January 26, 2014

Joshua 22

“Rumors, Hearsay, and Half-truths”

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Pastor Gary’s message this week includes a quick overview of [Joshua 10–21](#), which includes the details of the ongoing military campaigns of the Israelites. In these chapters we learn that they subdued nearly all of the entire Promised Land, and in the process, dominated cities, defeated kings, and divided the land among the twelve tribes.

In this study, we’ll learn that we need to believe the best until we know the rest, recognize that hearsay is only one side of the story, and be aware of the temptation to be a party to gossip and slander.

Dominating Cities

1. [Joshua 10:12–14](#) - *“On the day the Lord gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the Lord in the presence of Israel: ‘O sun, stand still over Gibeon, O moon, over the Valley of Aijalon.’ So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies, as it is written in the Book of Jashar.¹ The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down*

¹ This was an ancient Hebrew writing that is no longer extant. It was probably a national songbook containing songs praising the exploits of Hebrew heroes. It is mentioned in the Old Testament account of Joshua’s command to the sun and moon to stand still during the battle with the five kings (Joshua 10:13) and in the account of David’s lament over Saul and Jonathan (2 Samuel 1:17–27). It is also possible that Solomon’s words of dedication of the temple (1 Kings 8:12–13) were included. According to the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament), the writer of that passage uses the same language as in Joshua 10:12–13 and asks rhetorically if Solomon’s statement were written in the book of “Song.” Some scholars believe that this question may have accidentally dropped out of the Hebrew text since the whole quotation appears in the Septuagint following Solomon’s prayer of 1 Kings 8:14–53. It is also likely that some Hebrew letters may have been transposed so that the Septuagint reads “Song” instead of “Jashar.” If one accepts these assumptions, then 1 Kings 8:12–13 would have been part of the Book of Jashar.

It is also possible that the Septuagint rendering, “Book of Song,” is the more correct title. All of the quotations are poetry; the term “Jashar” has never been explained satisfactorily; and “Jashar” has similarities to various Hebrew root forms meaning, “to sing.” Hence, some scholars believe that “Book of

about a full day. There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the Lord listened to a man. Surely the Lord was fighting for Israel!"

2. To say that the sun stands still implies that the sun normally moves, but we know the sun doesn't normally move; it's the earth that rotates on its axis around the sun.
3. We shouldn't let the language dissuade us from believing this miracle, because the Bible uses the language of appearance and observation.
4. When we watch the weather report on TV, the meteorologist will oftentimes refer to the time of the sunrise and the sunset, even though the sun doesn't rise or set; it's the language of appearance and observation.
5. Exactly how the Lord did this miracle is not described in the Bible.
 - a. It could have been some form of bending refractions of the light from the sun.
 - b. It could have been a wobble in the direction of the Earth's axis of rotation.
 - c. It could have been the slowing of the earth's rotation (and God simultaneously stopping the cataclysmic events that would have naturally occurred, like tidal waves, etc.
 - d. Use this link to access an article that provides an in-depth look at what many have called Joshua's Long Day. ²

Defeating Kings

6. [Joshua 12](#) records the list of kings who were defeated, and [Joshua 12:24](#) tells us there were *"thirty-one kings in all."*

Song" is a more correct title.

The nature of the book cannot be determined with certainty except to say that it probably contained a wide variety of songs. This is evident as one considers the types of materials contained in the three passages mentioned above. One is an appeal for the prolonging of daylight in order for Israel to complete a military victory; one is an example of David's literary skill and an expression of the national importance and close friendship of the persons involved; and one is an exclamation extolling God's supremacy over ritual and nature.

The origin of the Book of Jashar is more clouded in obscurity than is its content. Some believe that it was a written collection of songs dating to the days before the monarchy. Some think that it was an oral tradition dating approximately from the time of Solomon. Others suggest that it was a vital instrument in the establishment of literary archives during the monarchy to preserve the notable events of Israelites. This has led to the suggestion that the Song of Miriam (Exodus 15:21) and the Song of Deborah (Judges 5) may have been part of the collection.

The book has long interested many people, and this interest has led to various false imitations, false identifications, and false reproductions of it. (Shared from Logos Bible Software <http://www.logos.com>)
http://biblia.com/books/tynbibdct/%25BookOfJashar_Writing

² <http://creation.com/joshuas-long-day>

Dividing The Land

7. In [Joshua 13](#), we learn of the allotment of land each of the 12 Tribes of Israel received.
8. The majority of the tribes, 9½, received their allotment on the western side of the Jordan River.
9. Remember, when God brought the Israelites up out of slavery in Egypt, their route took them south of the Dead Sea, and then moved to the east, where they settled for a time until they crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land.
10. When they were east of the Jordan, the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh went before Moses and said, “We like it on the eastern side, so we don’t want any land of the other side of the Jordan. Can we settle here and receive this land as our inheritance?”
11. [Numbers 34:13-15](#) - *“Moses commanded the Israelites: ‘Assign this land by lot as an inheritance. The Lord has ordered that it be given to the nine and a half tribes, because the families of the tribe of Reuben, the tribe of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance. These two and a half tribes have received their inheritance on the east side of the Jordan of Jericho, toward the sunrise.’ ”*
12. Moses granted their request under one condition: “Set up your homes, get your families situated, build pens for your livestock, then come with your brothers and fight to subdue the Promised Land. Once the land has been conquered, you can go back to the eastern side and live.”

Historical Background - [Joshua 22:1-12](#)

13. The 9½ tribes on the western side of the Jordan River heard that the 2½ tribes on the eastern side had built a large, imposing altar, which caused the 9½ tribes to get so stirred up that they wanted to go to war against their brothers.
14. The 9½ tribes jumped to the conclusion that the 2½ tribes had built a replacement altar for the one in Shiloh, on the western side of the Jordan River, where the Tabernacle of the Lord stood.
15. The 9½ tribes assumed the 2½ tribes were defecting and that they intended to develop their own separate system of worship, at their own separate altar on the east side of the Jordan River.

16. The 9½ tribes viewed the actions of the 2½ tribes to be blasphemous and autonomous.

Historical Background - [Joshua 22:13-20](#)

17. A delegation was sent on behalf of the 9½ tribes to the 2½ tribes, and the delegation started a tirade, making assumptions, accusations, and threats, because they wanted the 2½ tribes to remember what happened to Achan!

Historical Background - [Joshua 22:21-29](#)

18. The 2 ½ tribes responded by saying, “You’ve got it all wrong! We didn’t build this altar as a replacement; we built it as a replica to remind you and future generations that we belong to you. We didn’t want your future generations to forget us and think that the Jordan River divided us. We will always come to worship at the House of the Lord with our offerings. We just built this as a witness and a reminder that we are God’s people too and that we belong to you!”

Historical Background - [Joshua 22:30-34](#)

19. The delegation for the 9½ tribes basically said: “Oh, thank God! We thought you had abandoned God and us! It’s good to know that’s not the case. Okay, well, never mind. We’ll be seeing you!”

20. Pastor Gary remarked that if he was part of the 2½ tribes, he would have spoken up and said: “That’s all well and good that you are ready to lay down your weapons and go home with a good report, but five minutes ago you were ready to turn us into shish kabobs and launch a civil war! How did this get started, anyway?”

21. [Joshua 22:11-12](#) provides the answer to this question: “*And when the Israelites heard that they had built the altar on the border of Canaan at Geliloth near the Jordan on the Israelite side, the whole assembly of Israel gathered at Shiloh to go to war against them.*”

- a. The KJV reads: “*And the children of Israel heard say, Behold, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh have built an altar over against the land of Canaan....*”
- b. We get the word hearsay from the term “*heard say.*”
- c. This whole thing got started over a rumor!

- d. Someone said something to someone else, and the juicy rumor made its way up the ladder to the leaders of Israel, who jumped to conclusions, believed what they heard, and who, without knowing all the facts, reacted rashly.

Believe The Best Until You Know The Rest

22. **1 Corinthians 13:6-7** - *“Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”*
23. The first course of actions is to believe the best and to give the benefit of the doubt.
24. It's possible, when you believe the best in someone, that you will be duped, but that's the risk love takes, because, until you know the whole story, you can't jump to conclusions about people based on your gut feelings.
25. We need to be cautioned to remember that our gut feelings aren't always right!
26. We need to be cautioned to remember that we need to make room for human error when it comes to our gut feelings or discernment, because we can damage relationships and others' reputation when we entertain half-truths, rumors or hearsay.
27. We have an obligation toward others to give the benefit of the doubt first, and investigate second.
28. We have an obligation toward others to withhold jumping to conclusions until all the facts are known.

Hearsay Is Only One Side Of The Story

29. **Proverbs 18:17** - *“The first to present his case seems right, till another comes forward and questions him.”*
30. **Proverbs 18:17**- *“Any story sounds true until someone sets the record straight.”* (NLT - New Living Translation ³)

³ <http://www.biblestudytools.com/nlt/proverbs/18-17.html>

31. It's easy for us to hear a friend's side of the story and be completely convinced about someone else, until we hear the other person's side, which is the reason hearsay is not permissible in a court of law.
 - a. This is because second- or third-hand information is oftentimes unreliable.
 - b. In this account, hearsay was so destructive that people were literally ready to kill each other because of an unfounded rumor.

The Twin Sins Of Hearsay Are Gossip And Slander

32. Very rarely does a person hear a rumor or hearsay and not repeat it.
33. If we allow others to share hearsay with us, we become a party to slander and gossip, which makes us equally guilty.
34. If people seek you out to tell you something about someone else, there's a reason they come to you; it's because they know they will find a listening ear.
35. **Titus 3:1-2** - *"Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men."*
36. **Proverbs 16:28** - *"A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends."*
37. Hearsay is deceptive and destructive.
 - a. It's deceptive because it only gives one side of the story.
 - b. It's destructive because jumping to conclusions and making assumptions about others can harm them and their reputations.

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read **Joshua 22:1-2** to provide an overview for this study.
3. Allow the people in your group to share experiences they've had when they jumped to a conclusion, believed what they heard before they had opportunity to investigate, or reacted rashly.
4. How have you been duped because you believed the best about someone?

5. Read and discuss [1 Corinthians 13:6-7](#).
6. Do you make decisions about someone or some situation based on your gut feelings?
7. Do you agree with Pastor Gary's statement that we have an obligation toward others to give the benefit of the doubt first, and investigate second?
8. Read and discuss [Proverbs 18:17](#).
9. Read and discuss [Titus 3:1-2](#) and [Proverbs 16:28](#).
10. Share examples of times when you've jumped to conclusions about someone or some situation only to find that after you've done a little investigating, that you were wrong?
11. Allow the people in your group to share examples of times when they or someone they know have been hurt by rumors, gossip, and slander.
12. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: believe the best until they know the rest; give the benefit of the doubt first, and investigate second; avoid jumping to conclusions and acting rashly; refuse to entertain hearsay, which often leads to gossip or slander; and finally, to leave what they don't know in God's hands.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).